Avila College acknowledges the Wurundjeri people, the traditional custodians of the land on which the College is built.

2013 Creative Arts Festival: "The Wizard of Aus"
Transforming Education

Improving the educational outcomes for all students is the core business of all places of learning. Avila College has invested in “improving student learning outcomes” via all teaching staff being involved in a cognitive coaching process. Group 8 Education has begun working with all teaching staff this year to improve student learning. A key aspect of Group 8’s work is focused around a process known as Performance Development Coaching (PDC). It is based on the notion that capacity is built into the school by the process itself so that it continues as part of our usual school operation and management. As we have recently undertaken our school review process and reflected on the feedback from staff, students and parents, PDC will become embedded into our school improvement plan and annual action plans in the future.

The coaching process involves a number of key elements that include peer observations of classroom practice so that teachers learn from each other and this then flows onto professional dialogue around classroom practice; anonymous student feedback of teacher classroom practices observed by their students; and individual staff completing a self-assessment against the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) standards. From the research that has been done by Group 8 and used as the basis for this PDC process “the best way to improve student learning is to build teacher competencies and improve their practice in the classroom” (John Corrigan, Founder and Principal of Group 8 Education). Our goal at Avila College is to embed PDC amongst our staff and improve student learning and outcomes.

Farewell and thanks

We bid farewell at the end of this term to two school officers who have been a part of our Avila College community for some time.

Mrs Jenny Eason, who has worked as one of our administration officers for the past 20 years, will retire at the end of this term to spend more time with her husband and the many animals that she provides care and shelter for on a voluntary basis.

Ms Sandra Bucovaz, who has been in the role of publications and promotions co-ordinator for the past 12 years, will also be leaving the College at the end of this term. Sandra has had a key role in the production of publications such as Avila Matters, the Old Collegians newsletter and the College Yearbook, as well as promotional advertisements in the media and newspaper coverage highlighting the achievements of our students and special events at the College.

I thank both women for their contributions to the college.

Ms Louise Gunther
Principal

Year 7 leaders elected

For the first time as secondary students the Year 7s had the opportunity to nominate themselves to become a Year 7 leader during Term Two.

There were more than 100 applications for the 11 positions. The applicants were of an extremely high standard from a year level of many talented and outgoing students. Congratulations to the successful girls!

Miss Carly Randle
Student Leadership Co-ordinator

Avila Matters cover - “Wizard of Aus”

The remarkable talent of Avila’s students cast its magic over an appreciative audience at the 2013 Creative Arts Festival - “The Wizard of Aus”. Pictured at centre stage are Laura Saunders as Dot, Zoe Harcatis as Swagman and Paige Harris and Tin Man.
Avila’s current students, as well as staff, continue to achieve across many disciplines both within school and beyond. Some of these achievements include:

- **Year 10 students - Sophia Elliott, Sarah Lambourne and Roshali Lokuge** have been offered positions in the Monash Scholars’ Program. The program commences this year and will continue to support the girls until the end of their secondary education.

- **Year 8 students - Kara Mumford and Manik Liyange** took out first place in a state-wide competition run by Home Economics Victoria while Caitlin Lewis and Dion Andrikopoulos were third. More details page 17.

- **Evangelia Diamantopoulos,** Year 11, was among 124 Year 11 and 12 students selected to attend the 18th national Schools Constitutional Convention in Canberra in March. See page 16 for Eva’s account of the experience.

- **Isabelle Wright,** Year 12, was a member of the School Sport Victoria Triathlon Team who competed at the Australian championships in April in NSW. Isabelle placed in the top 25 overall in the senior age division.

- **Sarah Papadimitriou,** Year 9, was a member of the School Sport Victoria 17 years and under softball team who competed in the Australian tournament in Perth in May.

- **Rebecca Andrews,** Year 11, has been granted a training agreement for water polo with the Victorian Institute of Sport for the next two years.

- In the 2013 Australian Geography Competition, which attracted 75,000 entries, seven of our students gained high distinctions, four gained distinctions and six received credits. More details on page 4.

- **Avila Health and PE teacher, Ms Jenny Brown,** will compete in the 11th World Dragon Boat Racing Championships in Hungary in July. Jenny also represented Australia in 2012 at the Asian championships in South Korea.

**Champion archer Fiona Guest**

Fiona has just left for Turkey for the World Cup in target archery. Last year, Fiona finished a very creditable 16th in the World Field championships in France.

“This year, I was very excited to be picked to compete for Australia at a World Cup. It is a target archery event rather than field and tougher to qualify for,” said Fiona who achieved a gold and silver at the nationals earlier this year.

Fiona took up archery about six years ago as an activity to share with the younger of her two sons who subsequently decided the sport was not for him but Fiona became hooked. Fiona is a member of the Waverley Archers.

**College high flyers**

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More than 100 of Avila’s Geography students tested their skills and knowledge against students from all around Australia in the 2013 Australian Geography Competition held earlier this year.

Congratulations to all girls who participated and particularly to the following special recipients:

**High Distinction:** Junior - Laura Burns, Zoe Evans, Joanne Martino, Claire Peethamparam, Emma Spencer and Alysha Wanigaratne. Intermediate - Catherine Pagliaro.

**Distinction:** Intermediate - Emilia Megroz. Senior - Alexandra Forrest, Bianca Malietzis and Kate Townsend.


Avila Geography teacher, Mrs Julia Armstrong, was pleased with the results and the fact that more than 100 students participated:

“We had a number of student geographers who performed to a very high level in the competition with seven gaining high distinctions, four with distinctions and six with credits,” she said, adding that the competition attracted about 75,000 entries so the results provided Avila with an external benchmark as to how our students are performing in certain aspects of geography.

Kath Berg, the competition’s national co-ordinator, said the competition helped promote geography to students.

“Geography is such an important subject in developing students a real understanding of the complex social and environmental interactions happening in the world around them,” said Ms Berg. “Over time, I hope the recently released national geography curriculum will mean all students will have the opportunity to better study this endlessly fascinating subject.”

High-scoring students in the Australian Geography Competition progress to international events in Russia and Poland. The Competition is a joint initiative of the Australian Geography Teachers’ Association and the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland.

Some of the high achieving geography students are pictured standing from left, Tiffany Hill-Donovan, Zoe Evans, Kate Townsend, Alexandra Forrest, Miranda Koroknai and Emma Spencer and front row from left, Catherine Pagliaro, Laura Burns, Kannica Tan, Emilia Megroz, Alysha Wanigaratne and Joanne Martino.

Mrs Julia Armstrong
Geography Teacher

**Saint Patrick's Day at the Cathedral**

Saint Patrick’s Cathedral was full to overflowing with primary and secondary school students from throughout the Melbourne Archdiocese who gathered to celebrate the feast of Saint Patrick.

Avila was well represented at the celebration during Catholic Education Week. Pictured with the Archbishop of Melbourne, the Most Rev. Denis Hart are from left Yasna Cook, Miss Lourdes Rank, Danielle Cahill, Eliza Guiliano, Mr John Rhynnehart, Ellena Hocking, Monica De Rango, Cara Fischer and Grace Ang.
During a recent Reflection Day for our Year 10 students, the idea of what it means to be a person of the Eucharist was explored. As is usual, the old saying, “to teach is to learn”, came into play!

As the day progressed and culminated in a celebration of the Eucharist, the thought struck me that the most profound message of the day and how we can best be people who live the Eucharist as Christians in Avila College was through presence.

When we are present to each other we are utterly in the moment. Our minds, our bodies and our spirit are truly involved in the other’s situation or story. When we talk about Jesus’ presence in the Eucharist, we talk not about bread and wine physically becoming flesh and blood, but rather the presence of Jesus through the people gathered, through the Word of God proclaimed, through the celebrant and through the bread and the wine. Jesus is present to us and we are called to be present to Him.

Fr Elio Capra, SDB, once put it this way: “We go to Eucharist, to receive Eucharist, to be Eucharist.” In this simple sentence is a profound meaning and sense of what it means to be Eucharistic people. It is, once again, about presence, about being present to other people. Teresa of Avila describes it as being a Godly lover and Nano Nagle describes it as putting our words into action. Both capture, in completely different ways, but both completely necessary, how important it is to be Eucharistic People, because to be a Eucharistic person is to seek out, find and celebrate the face of Jesus in all those we meet.

And so we return to presence. The Year 10 girls and their RE teachers were challenged to find Jesus in all people. Though it would be easy to do this with friends and family, it is utterly different when it come to the stranger or the one with whom I struggle to like or be around.

Fr Hien Vu, Parish Priest of St Michael’s, Ashburton, joined us on the day to celebrate Eucharist with us.

Throughout the liturgy he reminded us about the importance of certain aspects of the ritual and how they parallel with other important social occasions. Again, it was about respect, listening, preparing and celebrating. In a few words, Fr Hien was able to encapsulate what the Year 10s had been contemplating and discussing throughout the day.

We went to Eucharist, to receive Eucharist, to be Eucharist. In doing so, we adopted the ideas of Teresa of Avila and Nano Nagle. We took further into our beings the understanding of what it means to be Ecclesiae Filia and committed ourselves to continue to be Eucharistic people. We invite you to do the same. We live in the hope that through the way we celebrate our faith and the way we live our lives that we, in some small way, may continue to transform the world. Come join us!
In her 21 years in the office at Avila College, Jenny Eason has seen many changes at the college, some quite revolutionary.

In that time not only has the office changed location (more than once) including a stint in portables on the oval, but Jenny has had to master at least three new computer systems which has involved her learning different methods of keeping student records, changes to the receipting and management of school fees, dealing with Government-imposed record keeping and systems, and the many other demands that arise in a busy school office environment. All of this she has achieved in a positive and accurate manner.

Jenny has worked under four principals - Mrs Maureen Thompson (1987 - 1995), the late Ms Filomena Salvatore (1995 - 2005), Miss Liz Gleeson (2006 - 2010) and current principal Ms Louise Gunther - and has also seen many staff come and go.

In her characteristic way, Jenny has willingly and cheerfully adapted to all these situations, making many a joke and winning plenty of friends.

At the end of free dress or fundraising days Jenny has found herself surrounded by notes and coins collected from more than 1100 students, all of which needs to be counted and banked. Again Jenny is not daunted and has completed the task efficiently and with good humour.

Everyone who walks through the office pops around the corner to say hello to her and have a laugh or a chat. The parents who come in to pay school fees are all on first name terms with her and feel comfortable to share their stories with her. Her office is famous for its animal soft toys and statues.

Jenny has also endeared herself to past students, maintaining the “Old Cols database” for many years and keeping it as up to date as possible, which all helps to further enrich the extended Avila family.

Beyond school, Jenny’s main passion is the care of animals, especially ones that are lost or injured. She and her husband, Steve, live on a property in Healesville with plenty of room for dogs, cats, sheep, ducks, goats, possums, chickens and any living thing in need of care. She belongs to Wildlife Rescue and responds at all hours of the day and night to save any animal or bird that needs rescuing. Jenny tenderly feeds orphaned joeys, possums, birds, lambs (the list is endless!) with an eye dropper or bottle and rejoices when they are able to fend for themselves.

In her retirement, Jenny will have time to help her husband with his business and, of course, more time to spend with her beloved animals. She might not have to get up so early to feed them all each morning, as she will not have the long drive from Healesville to Mount Waverley and back each day.

Everyone at Avila will miss Jenny, but all wish her well in this new stage of her life. Hopefully she will keep sending us her funny or poignant emails (usually about animals!) to give us a laugh or something to think about.

Mr Norm Phillips, Business Manager and Mrs Maria Nankervis, Registrar

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Big welcome to little Will

A big congratulations to Mrs Catherine Spurritt and her husband Andrew on the arrival of their first child, William John Spurritt.

Will arrived safely on April 20 weighing 3.72 kg.

Mrs Spurritt, Avila’s Languages Curriculum Leader, will return from maternity leave in Term Four.

Mrs Spurritt is a former College Captain (nee Davenport, Class of 2003) at Avila.
New home in Wominjika Room

In Term Two, the Reconciliation Group made itself a home in the Wominjika Room, our own dedicated space at the college. It is wonderful to have our own special area and feel that Aboriginal people are joining us as we discuss the group’s future activities.

We certainly felt their presence as we drafted “The Covenant” that we make with the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, outlining our plans to strengthen Reconciliation at Avila. The Co-ordinator of the Ministry, Mrs Vicki Clark, assisted us and also complimented the group on the breadth of the school’s commitment.

Avila’s very own “Australian Story” dvd had its premier at one of our Reconciliation Group meetings. This program was a short documentary on Avila’s very own Aboriginal students telling something of their own stories. It was a great privilege to have our students bravely share with us and then answer questions afterwards. We would like to thank each of them and Mrs Jacqui Benton for an important moment in the College’s history with Aboriginal people. This resource has also been used by Year 12 English classes in their exploration of race in their text study, Skin.

We also participated in The Long Walk to the Indigenous AFL round at the MCG. This year’s event featured the Ltyente Apurte drummers in the official pre-match entertainment. We prepared for the walk with Mayatili Marika explaining to years 7, 8 and 10 why “The Long Walk” is as necessary today as it was in 2004. Since last year’s event, our banner has been a big hit, making it onto the official “Long Walk” webpage and the promotional dvd … some of us are stars!

We are extra proud as the bollards that were made for the anniversary of the apology to the Stolen Generations have been spotted by different organisations who have asked to use them. The bollards have enhanced the Mullim Mullim Festival in Mitcham and were on stage for the media release of the next stage of The Long Walk program - which is this time a walk from Melbourne to Adelaide to highlight the need for the recognition of Aboriginal people in the constitution. We are grateful to a team of generous Year 9 students, under the leadership of Katerina Amoranto, who produced bollards of additional footballers at the request of Reconciliation Victoria for this event. Some of the bollards were also featured at a Trivia Night for the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry at Siena College which the Avila team won.

An important moment of recognition in Reconciliation Week is the memorial service at the Shrine of Remembrance for Indigenous servicemen and women. Representatives from our Year 9 history classes placed a wreath from the Avila community to recognise the selflessness of Indigenous Australians at a time when the nation did not even recognise them as citizens.

Another highlight of the term was our invitation to St Joan of Arc’s primary school in Brighton to teach students about the significance of acknowledging the land as their school prepared to do this for the first time. Members of the Reconciliation Group conducted activities for their grades 3 - 6 students and helped create an impressive wall covered in more than 100 faces of distinguished Aboriginal Australians.

Mrs Christine Valladares
Reconciliation Group Co-ordinator
Doing it differently for Santa Teresa

Following her experience of being on the 2012 Santa Teresa Immersion, Year 11 student Catherine Smith donated to the community the $600 she earned during Lent from her part time job. In the following article, Catherine reflects on her experience and how it inspired to “do things differently”.

On September 13, 2012, 13 Avila students, three supervising teachers and approximately 20 23kg bags of donations boarded a plane from Tullamarine Airport to Alice Springs. As part of the Santa Teresa Immersion we spent three days in Alice Springs, before departing for the 82km journey to the south east to the community of Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa in Arrente, the language of the community). It was an indescribable experience, during which we encountered extraordinarily inspirational people such as the women in the Spirituality Centre, Op shop, the teachers at the local school, and the Brothers and Sisters.

I spent a lot of time at the Spirituality Centre, cleaning and simply being among the ladies as they painted intricate patterns on crosses and other items. It was beautiful and so peaceful to just be there with them. We also experienced a smoking ceremony at the Spirituality Centre with an Aboriginal healer by the name of Mia. We were told that Mia could see everybody’s spirit and judge in what ways they required healing. Aramophlia leaves were burnt and each individual approached the centre of the circle to be healed. We were exceptionally privileged to participate in the ceremony as most indigenous people are never given the opportunity themselves.

Prior to the immersion, I was quite nervous as there seemed to be so many expectations to feel a certain way, however after the most exhausting, interesting and special 10 days of my life I was both ready to return home, but sad to leave. I remain so grateful to all the people who participated in the immersion, and cannot find words adequate to express my gratitude for such an opportunity.

Six months later the Lenten period began, and I decided I wanted something different. Previously I’d given up chocolate, junk food, bread, meat and so forth, however this year I decided I’d like to do something that would hopefully make a difference to someone’s life, even if only slightly. I began to put all the money I was making through a part time job aside, and decided to donate all of the money I’d earned during the 40 days of Lent to the Santa Teresa Community. I raised $600 in total.

I contacted Sister Liz who is a prominent figure in the community to ask how the money could be used. Sister Liz decided that the money would go towards heating in the Spirituality Centre to make it more comfortable for the women working in the exceptionally cold winter months.

The consequential opportunities we have been given through the immersion are so extensive, and I am comforted by the knowledge that I will return to the community at some point in my life.

Don’t cry because it’s over, smile because it happened. Dr Seuss
Avila Matters Term 2, 2013 - 9

Avila College and the community of Santa Teresa enjoy a long standing relationship which began when students from the community completed years of their schooling at Avila in the 1980s. Selected students in Year 10 annually visit Santa Teresa in the Northern Territory on a Cultural Immersion Program to continue our commitment to reconciliation and to retain connections formed with the community more than 30 years ago. This year we supported a group of students and staff, known as the Ltyentye Apurte Drummers, to play in Melbourne as part of the Dreamtime at the G and Long Walk celebrations held on Saturday May 25. We also felt very privileged to have many of our friends that we have made over the years involved in an event which is very special to the Avila Community, our annual Creative Arts Festival.

Their performance at our Creative Arts Festival, The Wizard of Aus, was a highlight for all involved and their trip to Melbourne represented the pinnacle and goal of months of preparation, work and training and was dedicated to their school principal, the late Mr Greg Crowe. Very sadly, Mr Crowe died tragically in a road accident late last year, and the group from Santa Teresa committed themselves to following through on this, his last wish. Avila College was able to support the group through the Year 10 cake stall fundraisers which are held at Oral Report evenings throughout the year.

Below is an excerpt from a letter which Avila received from the Deputy Principal, Ms Ali Galio, from the Santa Teresa Community Education Centre, where she passes on her thanks to our school community.

“Your students and school community deserve to be congratulated on the way that they so genuinely and openly cared for and included our drummers. Performing in your Creative Arts Festival was a very memorable experience. It was so heartening to see such wonderful young women so freely giving up their weekend time to support the group at Federation Square and accompanying and helping the kids through the shopping expedition at the Vic Markets. Please pass on our thanks to these students and all staff who went out of their way to offer support.”

Miss Darcie Kane-Priestley
Performing Arts and Immersion Co-ordinator

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**In tune with the Ltyentye Apurte beat**

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Miss Darcie Kane-Priestley
Performing Arts and Immersion Co-ordinator
Each year, Avila’s Year 10 students complete 25 hours of community service in a placement of their choice. The 2013 Year 10s started their journey in Term Four last year when they approached different not-for-profit organisations in the community to match their skills and interests with the needs of the community. Students chose op-shops, pre-schools, aged care facilities and animal care organisations. After learning how to serve others as Jesus did in their RE program, students were given the opportunity to practice some of the values of discipleship that they have learnt from their study of discipleship in the Gospel of Mark.

The following reflections from Year 10 students describe the rich and rewarding experiences of the Community Service program.

**Mr John Beekhof**  
Religious Education Curriculum Leader

Community Service for me wasn’t a week off school to go and just chill. It was a time where I could really give something back to the community. My week was not easy but as I pushed through it I learned many things about myself and I’m glad I had the opportunity to do so.

**Lauren Radnell - Waverley Animal Hospital**

Working with children with special needs at Glenallen Special School was a new and very rewarding experience for me. I helped with music therapy and IT classes for the seven to 10-year olds. At first it was confronting, but I felt blessed with the opportunities given to me and glad I could contribute to the community.

**Jana Andritsos - Glenallen School**

Through the community service program we act as modern day disciples putting the needs of others before our own. As a teenager it can be easy to think that life is “all about me” but in the community we were able to reflect on our lives and how we can help others.

**Stephanie Le Sueur - Holy Saviour Primary School**

Community Service gave us more life experience and the opportunity to see life through the eyes of people less fortunate. The week gave us a chance to think and reflect on why we do community service at Avila. By the end of the week, we were excited to see our friends again and exchange stories of about our placements. One of my friends has changed her career path because of her experience.

**Isabelle Hanna – Salvos Stores**

It’s important to give back to the community we are growing up in. At my placement, I helped students come out of their shell and gain confidence. After seeing the effort the teachers go to, to accommodate the needs of individual students, I appreciated my own teachers much more.

**Aleesha Jansen – St Simon the Apostle Primary School**

Community service is important so we can give back and reach out to the community. I enjoyed the interactions and offering a warm friendly smile to the customers of the op shop. I learnt the importance of treating others with respect, and my aim was to make the clients feel better leaving the shop than when they walked in. I learnt that there is always a way to make someone’s day a little better.

**Emma Butler – Salvos Stores**
Mark Twain observed that “There are only two types of speakers in the world. 1. The nervous and 2. liars.”

Term Two has seen 14 Avila students conquer their nerves and participate admirably in public speaking events throughout the state. Public Speaking competitions allow our girls to develop highly transferable skills, meet students from all walks of life and sharpen their intellect as they prepare and deliver rehearsed and impromptu speeches.

Four students were fortunate enough to participate in the Model United Nations Assembly, held in the Legislative Assembly of State Parliament. Clarissa Frizziero and Jacqueline Drake had the very difficult task of persuading the assembly to view policy from the perspective of North Korea and Georgia Vance and Sarah Lambourne represented the relatively new country of South Sudan. Both teams participated enthusiastically in the debating of resolutions.

Term Two also saw the Ern Ainger competition held in Richmond with two of our students giving excellent presentations. Seasoned Year 12 speaker, Yvanah Hernandez delivered an impassioned speech on the benefits of affordable public housing and Year 9 student Tahlia De Teodoro spoke with knowledge and conviction about our digital footprint and potential invasions of privacy via technology.

Avila hosted a heat of Rostrum’s “Voice of Youth” competition on May 19. Our junior team comprised of Emily Govic, Caitlyn Quinn, Isabelle Benedos and Nikitha Pynadarth. Isabelle and Nikitha progressed to the semi finals with Nikitha winning and progressing to the State final which was held in June.

Our Seniors team comprised of Sophia Elliott, (who stepped in at the last minute and did a great job), Leah Giakoumis, Tamar Haigazian and Kathryn Elliott. Kathryn progressed to the semi finals where she was runner up.

A big thank you to all the girls and their families for participating and supporting these events. It takes a lot of commitment to participate in and often the girls are balancing school, work and family demands. The experiences they acquire through participating offers another layer to the skills they take into adulthood.

Not only have the captains been busy with Public Speaking competitions, they have been involving themselves in stimulating debates at the Debaters Association of Victoria Competition. Wesley was awash with blue and maroon as our 18 teams arrived to compete. We have completed the third round of competition and have teams at all levels who may make it into the finals if they can remain successful in the next two rounds.

The stars of the competition this year are our Year 9s. At the start of the season we had eight teams wanting to compete, forcing two teams, in their first year in the senior competition, to move up to the Year 10 competition. They have been very successful, with one of the teams still undefeated.

This term our juniors have been busy learning the skills of Public Speaking and Debating at workshops run by our seniors. They have been entertained by the proposition “That Avila should become Mazila” which was decisively defeated. They are looking forward to the interschool competition which begins next term.

Also we would like to introduce our new Year 7 captain, Alysha Wanigaratne. we wish her well.

Mrs Kelly Bunning
Public Speaking Co-ordinator
Darwin, Australia, Dot and her gang travelled through the streets to seek the advice of the great Prime Minister at the Avila 2013 Creative Arts - “The Wizard of Aus”.

The orchestra, led by Ms Beth Lyall, opened the magical night on May 23, introducing Dot to her unfamiliar surroundings.

The magical night then unfolded with appearances from Kath and Kim, as well as Ned Kelly and Kevin Rudd, performed by the drama acts from years 7 to 12.

Each act incorporated various music ensembles, enthusiastic dance crews and creative drama performances which brought Dot closer to home and introduced her to the bustling life of the city of Melbourne. The evening culminated in a group finale consisting of all cast and crew members joining together in a dance.

A big congratulations to the Stage Crew; who worked tirelessly under the guidance of Mrs Chris Nichols, Mr Allan Kennedy and Mrs Barbara Woods, the Drama Department; under the guidance of Miss Darcie Kane-Priestley, the Music Department under the direction of Ms Roxane Lascaris and the dancers and choreographers organised by Ms Lauren Stute.

The night was a huge success, which saw the return of Dot home to Darwin, safe and sound.

Kimielle D’Mello
Music Captain
On Easter Thursday 13 intrepid students and three staff embarked on the opportunity of a lifetime: a 13 day study tour of Indonesia. Despite a delay with a connecting flight and only having three hours of sleep, our first day in Indonesia started at 4 am at the largest Buddhist temple in the world, Borobudur, where we watched the sunrise. One of the highlights of Java was our tour on bikes around a traditional Javanese village, where we saw some of the local industries that made this village self-sufficient and where we met and talked to lots of friendly locals, played gamelan with their children and saw life as it has been for Indonesians for generations.

Our tour through Java took us to some spectacular sites, including the Sultan’s Palace, the ancient Water Castle and an underground mosque. We had the opportunity to shop in both traditional markets and in more modern emporiums, testing our bargaining skills and our Bahasa Indonesia. We visited a government school, where we were greeted with a banner welcoming us. Here we talked with many Indonesian students and made friends while utilising our Bahasa Indonesia skills and they used their Bahasa Inggris. The welcoming ceremony complete with music, singing and speeches was completely overwhelming and our rendition of the Avila school hymn was a hit (despite our terrible singing!) As well as this planned visit, we were lucky enough to be able to drop in on a Catholic girls’ senior high school (Stella Duce), with whom we are in the process of beginning a sister-school relationship.

A very special event in our Java program was attending the Ramayana Ballet at the oldest Hindu temple complex in the world, Prambanan. In Yogyakarta we tried our hands at silver making and then traditional batik painting, making unique and treasured items we will keep forever.

The people of Java were some of the friendliest and most welcoming we have ever encountered, and their appreciation of our ability to speak Bahasa Indonesia gained us many new friends and memorable experiences.

Whilst we were sad to leave our fabulous guide, Sutan, after seven days under his careful, friendly guidance, our adventure continued on to the beautiful Hindu island of Bali.

We were extremely fortunate to be in Bali during the festival time of Galungan and Kuningan, a 10 day festival devoted to ancestor worship and one of the holiest times for Balinese. As a result, many of the places we visited were vibrantly alive with colour and with families visiting holy sites to celebrate. We visited Besakih, the Mother Temple and Tirta Gangga Water Palace, as well as trekking through lush terraced rice fields.

Our stay in the beautiful highland village of Ubud was delightful, complete with monkeys trying to steal food from our plates at breakfast! In Ubud, we had a dance lesson, followed by a performance of the same dance.

Moving down south of the island, we travelled to our final destination, Sanur. Our hotel in Sanur provided us with luxury and relaxation and was a perfect place from which to visit the wonderful temples of Tanah Lot and Uluwatu, where we saw the spectacular Kecak Dance at sunset. We ventured into Kuta for some tourist watching and last minute shopping before we said a tearful goodbye to gorgeous Indonesia, it’s vibrant colours and wonderful people.

A special ‘terima kasih banyak’ to our three patient and knowledgeable staff, Bu Manning, Bu O’Sullivan and Bu Kelly, without whom this tour could not have happened. We have come back with lasting memories, much better Indonesian language, excellent bargaining skills and have made many new friends.

Mrs Clare Manning
The Australian curriculum: Technologies, is moving in an exciting and challenging new direction. It is requiring schools to teach their students about producing, rather than simply consuming, technology. At Avila, we have been moving in this direction in the past few years.

Consider this line from the draft curriculum, Technologies: “Use agile development techniques to collaboratively develop (design, implement and test) software that meets user requirements”. This is one of many progression points for students in years 9 and 10. In simpler terms, “students should learn to develop programs, not just use them”.

At Avila, we are introducing our students to the process of computer programing in Year 7, through the educational package, Scratch. Students use Scratch to animate stories and modify computer games. Most importantly, they learn the building blocks of computer programs and solve problems in a way that was not possible before the advent of computers. In later years, they can participate in the APP group, take electives where they build websites, model 3D objects and develop their own interactive software.

Students racing against 3D printer to construct a cube

Parents could consider asking their daughters to name a few successful entrepreneurs and note their answers. Students may name Steve Jobs, Bill Gates or Mark Zuckerberg. Did a woman feature in their answers? Worldwide, there is a move towards lifting the participation of women in technology. Recent graduates of Avila have been awarded generous scholarships dedicated to supporting women in engineering. Recently, Westpac announced that it plans to reserve half of its yearly intake of IT graduates for female applicants.

We are providing our young women with opportunities to participate fully in the knowledge economy. We would be failing them if we simply taught them to use other people’s creations. The Digital Technologies teachers at Avila are learning continuously and working hard to keep our course offerings up to date and in line with the new curriculum.

Ziad Baroudi,
Curriculum Leader, Technologies.

Year 10 The Menu: An Invitation to Dinner

Students undertaking The Menu in Semester One have been working enthusiastically on the development of a three course menu since the beginning of Term Two.

Their first task was to create a special invitation so as to request the pleasure of a significant woman to mark the role of mothers, godmothers, aunties and sisters, who are such important role models in the lives of our students.

Each group of students presented their own plans for an entree, main course and dessert then pooled their ideas, examined their skills and strengths and created a group menu. The challenging part of the task was trialing the different recipes to ensure a successful outcome and these classes certainly made students far more aware of the communication and team work needed to complete all tasks.

On Thursday, May 16, 24 Guests arrived to elegantly set tables, charming hostesses and attractively presented food. The variety of food was amazing and even though the guests were quite full from the first two courses, room was found to consume the amazing desserts.

Congratulations to the students for their successful work and a huge thank-you to Mrs Maureen Garrecht who assisted myself and the students on the evening.

Mrs Elizabeth Trembath
Two very different artists, one in a private and the other in a public gallery space, yet both focusing on the same art technique and material... Earlier this year, the Year 11 Studio Arts class was privileged to view the work of Tim Jones (Australian Galleries) and Bea Maddock (National Gallery Victoria). During the excursion, as art students we were able to experience inspiration and understanding of how two artists created very different work based on very different themes, yet shared the same materials and techniques. It was truly rewarding and of great honour to be able to see in person how two people can develop and achieve totally different work using the same material.

The first gallery we went to was private and displayed Tim Jones’ artwork. As we walked through the gallery there was a sense of cute and contemporary mixed together in the same atmospheric theme, which certainly matched the title of the gallery, “Good Vibes”. Tim Jones’ screen prints, sculptures and ornaments focused mainly on the theme of nature and fantasy.

The second gallery we attended was public, and displayed artwork belonging to Bea Maddock. This gallery contained all of her work, varying from screen print’s to charcoal drawings. As soon as we entered and explored this gallery, the change in theme was evident, and it was clear to us that Bea Maddock’s theme was isolation and loneliness.

An insightful and wonderful day filled with lots of knowledge in the world of art.

Bianca Dentesano, 11 Orange

Doin’ it differently (DID) in 2013 has been an unexpected delight! With such a wonderful list of students and DID at the forefront of my mind, I decided to negotiate the focus for Year 10 D&T with my new class. I had involved students last year in the Wool4Skool competition for the first time, with mixed success. With trepidation I asked this year’s group if they were interested in the 2013 design brief. When given the opportunity to design an outfit (in wool) for a member of the “royal family”, and with the possibility of winning some serious money, the decision was a “no-brainer”.

Since then the students have been immersed in the design process, extending themselves to design an outfit to capture the essence of their chosen ‘royal’ and the judge’s attention. The girls selected a variety of “royals”, becoming acquainted through the development of a “client profile”. They created a “mood” page to reflect the targeted event and “royal’s” personality, developed an innovative “design” and composed a concise “creative statement”, describing their creative process.

To complement their understanding of the qualities of merino wool, (with the encouragement of our talented resident ‘felter’, Helen Tillinh), the students participated in two nuno-felting workshops to fulfil their production requirements. With the trust and support of Technologies Curriculum Leader, Mr Ziad Baroudi, Year 10 ‘Design Teckies’ enjoyed the benefits of a skilled textile artist and instructor extraordinaire, Robyn Steel-Stickland. Robyn came to Avila and workshopped the 21 students to produce a sample piece of nuno-felted fabric. This was followed by students hand dyeing silk in preparation for a further workshop day at Robyn’s business, the Open Drawer. Once there the students produced their own unique design and color combination using a nuno-felting technique. This involved collaboration, teamwork and persistence, which edged the girls well out of their comfort zone. The results were superb! Each handmade piece of fabric was alive with organic textures and rich colour combinations created from the blending of hand dyed silk and wisps of merino wool and silk fibre.

It has been a privilege to work with such delightful students, prepared to embrace any challenge I throw their way! Thanks to the Avila administration for its support of new ways of learning and to Robyn Steel-Stickland who has never attempted fabric making on such a scale but still said “Sure!”

Mrs Lisa Walsh

Inspired by uniqueness, creativity

Two very different artists, one in a private and the other in a public gallery space, yet both focusing on the same art technique and material...
March 21st was World Home Economics Day and to celebrate this event the Food Technology Department held special activities for students and staff.

A biscuit Scrabble gaming session at lunch time on March 21 proved to be very popular with students from all year levels taking part and, as an added incentive, they got to literally eat their words …

In addition to providing students with some other hands-on activities, the Food Technology staff held after school cooking classes for their colleagues. The classes included making home made twice-baked gnocchi and the best-ever sausage rolls and dumplings. The classes were well received by staff and the “fruits of their labour” were enjoyed by all family members.

The activities highlighted the importance of Food Technology in acquiring skills for life.

Home Economics “facilitates students to discover and further develop their own resources and capabilities to be used in their personal life by directing their professional decisions and actions or preparing them for life” (Pendergast D., 2012 The Intention of Home Economics Education: A Powerful Enabler for Future-Proofing the Profession).

The study of Home Economics is focused on a person’s well-being and making people life-long learners. Home Economics teaches us to learn by doing, by being, by knowing and by working and living in community.

With the study of Home Economics now in its sixth generation it is more than ever the key to education for all young people.

Students undertaking studies in any or all these fields at school often develop excellent decision making skills and are able to work through problems with clarity and sound understanding. The study of Home Economics provides:

- an academic discipline in the areas of research
- an arena for everyday living for individuals, families and communities
- as a curriculum area facilitating students to develop and discover how to use resources and making sound decisions (adapted from: Creating Home Economics Future: The Next 100 Years. Pendergast D. et al, 2012)

Ms Carmela Marino

Home Economics Victoria Food Design Challenge

Year 8 students studying Food Technology in semester one took part in a state wide competition run by Home Economics Victoria.

The students were asked to design, produce and evaluate a new scone variety based on a range of considerations and constraints based on the Cookery Australian Way recipe. The girls were competing with more than 800 Victorian students from year 3-12.

In the Year 7-8 category Avila students took out first and third places for their creative and innovative scone designs. Congratulations to first placetters, Kara Mumford and Manik Liyange for their award winning pumpkin, cinnamon and nutmeg scones (pictured); and third prize winners Caitlin Lewis and Dion Andrikopoulos for Italian inspired scone served with a fresh yoghurt accompaniment.

The girls received prizes from Macmillan Education Australia and the school was fortunate to receive Sunbeam appliances for the Food Technology Department.
On June 5, years 9 and 10 students studying Italian went to Melbourne University for the Dante Alighieri Poetry Competition.

For the Year 9s, it was our first time, so we were a bit nervous and didn’t know what to expect. However, throughout Term Two, we had been practising and memorising our chosen poem which we had to recite to a judge.

Upon arrival at the university, we were led to an interesting looking lecture theatre where we waited nervously for our names to be called. We then followed our ushers to our separate rooms and waited for our respective turns. The judges were all really friendly and encouraging, and helped us to relax. We were all pretty successful and hopefully nobody forgot the words!

After the competition, we were lucky enough to be able to spend two hours in the famous Lygon Street. First, we all visited Brunetti, which was “humongous” and had a really authentic Italian feel to it. We bought some yummy pastries, before dispersing into smaller groups to explore the shops and restaurants.

We all felt very full by the end after our yummy pizza and gelati, as well as various other Italian delicacies. Overall, it was a fun and delicious day, and we all had a fantastic time.

Ella Barbis and Jessica McLean, Year 9

Sunday the March 24 saw 121 Avila students from years 7 to 12 participate in the annual Red Cross Door Knock Appeal.

From 9 am that morning students paired up and were allocated specific streets in the Mount Waverley area in which they door knocked to collect donations for the Red Cross. Students were transported to and from their allocated areas by teaching staff and upon arrival back to Avila the donated funds were collected and calculated.

The morning was a great success with about $3,300 raised. Both the students and teachers who volunteered their time were supporting the Red Cross’ effort to assist local and international aid for the less fortunate.

On behalf of the Avila student body we would like to express our many thanks to the Avila staff for giving up their Sunday morning sleep-in to transport students to and from their fundraising areas and also to the students who volunteered to participate in the Door Knock.

Our thanks are also extended to the parents of the Avila students for bringing them to the event, and a special thank you to Deputy Principal Wellbeing, Mrs Christine Kralj, and the SRC team for organising the event.

Samantha Strathopoulos and Fotini Hrambanis Year 11
Students take their seats in Canberra

In March, I joined 123 other politically-enthused students in years 11 and 12 from across Australia for the National Schools Constitutional Convention in Canberra.

We gathered to explore the topic of “The recognition of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander People in the Constitution”. A most pertinent topic at present.

Our first stop was Parliament House, where we sat in on question time and were acknowledged by all of the MPs, including the Prime Minister, Ms Julia Gillard! During a break I was lucky enough to speak to my local MP, Alan Griffin, as well as the speaker of the House of Representatives, and MP for Chisholm, Anna Burke. They talked about how they got into politics and what they would like to see from their political party over the course of this year. We proceeded to visit Government House where Governor General, Ms Quentin Bryce, spoke about the importance of youth participation in debating national issues.

The two day-program was jam-packed with keynote sessions, guest speakers and panel discussions - all of which took place in Old Parliament House. With the other students, I was able to take part in conversations that challenged me and deepened my understanding by reflecting on perspectives that had never previously crossed my mind. Thursday night saw us having dinner in the High Court of Australia followed by a tour of the court and addresses from Casey Keed, a state finalist for Young Australian of the Year as well as The Hon. Justice Stephen Gageler, Justice of the High Court.

We engaged in our own mock referendum in which we were asked “Do you approve of this proposed alteration: To alter the Constitution to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, their cultures, languages and heritage and to replace racially discriminatory provisions?” The outcome was an overwhelming “yes”.

This opportunity gave me great intellectual insight into the political and legal processes involved in changing the constitution. Not only did I emerge from this experience pondering the political questions that are to shape our nation, but I had a deeper understanding of the past and present political treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and an appreciation of the possibilities the future holds in terms of their recognition in the constitution.

A big thank you to Mrs Felicity Brundell and Mrs Christine Valladares for assisting me!

Evangelia Diamantopoulos,

$1,255 for Cancer Council

This year the Student Representative Council (SRC) invited Avila College students to take part the Cancer Council’s Biggest Morning Tea on Tuesday May 21 ... We were truly impressed with the response, with just under 250 students paying $5 to be involved.

The quadrangle at recess was filled with hungry students ready to devour churros (Spanish doughnuts) and hot chocolate. It was wonderful to see so many students enjoying the last of the autumn sun and supporting the work of the SRC in raising much-needed funds.

We had great raffle prizes and we would like to warmly thank the following local companies for their donations: Colette Accessories - Handbag, Endota Spa, Schnitz Restaurant, The Pancake Parlor and Trampoline Ice cream.

We achieved our target of doubling the number of people involved from last year. We are also tremendously proud to have sent a cheque of $1255 from Avila College to the Cancer Council. We hope that our donation can help provide free accommodation to cancer patients and their families during treatment, or fund research into new and better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer.

SRC 2013

Enjoying delicious churros and hot chocolate in support of the SRC’s Biggest Morning Tea are from left, Erin Flatters, Georgia D’Souza, Catherine Pagliaro, and Alicia Bonaffini.
After months of anticipation and excitement, Friday April 19 finally arrived and the Year 11 students were set for one of the best nights of their lives ... the Year 11 Formal.

Invitations were distributed and it was off to hair and beauty appointments for the girls.

Hours later, grand entrances were made at the formal’s venue at Lincoln of Toorak, the girls in their elegant evening wear with their handsome partners by their sides.

After a series of greetings and speeches, delectable ravioli was served as entrée while photobooth and professional photo stations were set up.

It was not long before everybody was on the dance floor dancing the night away, and the teachers definitely pulled out some exceptional moves. While the DJ spun some epic beats catering to everyone’s taste, professional photo shoots were being conducted, making the girls and their partners feel like models for the night.

Soon after, two mouth-watering mains of either beef or chicken with a side of vegetables were presented. Then it was back to the dance floor for some serious boogying. Dessert was finally served; a scrumptious rich chocolate tart with a dollop of vanilla ice-cream.

An enormous thank you to all the VCAL girls, and most importantly Ms Jenny Dunn; the night truly wouldn’t have been such a success without all your efforts and attention to detail. A heartfelt thanks to Lincoln of Toorak and the staff for their hospitality, our magnificent DJ and photographers. Also a huge thank you to Year 11 co-ordinator, Mrs Anna Marvelli and all the homeroom teachers who tolerated our crazy moments of anticipation. Each and every student looked absolutely stunning and the night truly was an absolute success. We are already eagerly anticipating next year’s formal and cannot wait to see what 2014 holds for our year level and guests. It will most definitely be another night we will never forget.

Danielle Cahill, Monica DeRango, Ellene Hocking, and Sam Stathopoulos
Year 11 SRC captains

Photographs courtesy Ken Nakanishi
The phrase about being “between a rock and a hard place” could not be further from the truth for Class of 2007 graduate, Helen Taylor.

Helen is a geologist, so rocks and all that make up the earth, are what she loves and thrives on. And as an extension, so too is contamination remediation.

Helen, 24, has had a “thing” about rocks since she started collecting them as a four-year-old and whilst she planned to become a sports teacher, she has no regrets about a last-minute decision to change focus.

“During the holidays at the end of Year 11, Dr Sue Liston (Head of Science at Avila) sponsored me to go on a trip with the AusIMM (Australian institute of Mining and Metallurgy) which is what truly inspired me to follow my passion for geology,” said Helen who completed an undergraduate degree in Science at Monash University, with a double major in geoscience and geography and environmental science. Helen then completed an honours degree in geosciences in 2011, researching the issue of acid sulphate soils in west Gippsland.

Currently working as an environmental geologist with Senversa, a small environmental consulting firm in Melbourne, Helen’s brief has been groundwater and soil contamination and more recently she has been assessing the impacts of asbestos contamination.

“Although I have a true passion for geology, my work has allowed me to follow another passion - contamination remediation.”

Whilst the female/male ration is fairly equal at her workplace, many of the sub contracting companies - drillers, excavators, service locators - all are male dominated.

“In these situations, as long as there is a mutual respect when working together it is all fine. In the beginning I was quite intimidated by our subbies but now I have a good relationship with all of them,” Helen said.

In terms of her course, Helen considered her honours year to be the most challenging yet the most rewarding. She particularly enjoyed the field-based work and spent a lot of time looking at rocks, volcanoes, fossils, rivers and other geomorphologies.

And while her work as a geologist is a world apart from her days at Avila, Helen treasures her time at the college and the friendships made, especially with Mrs Liz Trembath. It was during her time at Avila that Helen’s mother passed away and the college community rallied to provide Helen with as much support as possible.

“Liz has been my rock and a true friend. When my mum passed away she was amazing and so supportive. Liz would pick me up for school in the morning and we would chat about how I was coping and how I could keep myself busy. Liz also would make me lunch everyday and make sure I had a good meal for the day. She and Annette Tynan (former college counsellor) were my rocks, they helped me through the year and also encouraged me to achieve my dreams and make my mum proud. Liz and I have continued this friendship, meeting for coffee and lunch at least every six months.

“I would not have been able to finish school and get the marks that I did if Liz had not been there to help me along - she is my angel. Each birthday and Christmas I give Liz an angel as a gift to remind her how important she has been in my life and how I hope she continues to be an angel for other students like me.”

Helen herself was a widely respected student leader and contributed much to the Avila community during her time at the college. She was heavily involved in a host of school activities, volunteering and social justice. Her list of achievements include being a general leader, captain of cricket and football, peer support leader, peer mediator and Reconciliation Group member. Helen’s leadership qualities were further reflected in her being the recipient of the Sister Josepha Dunlop and Australian Defence Force awards for student leadership, and the Mulgrave Country Club Award.

Although now working full time, Helen still makes time to volunteer, play sport and socialise.

“If I had one piece of advice for young students at Avila, it would be to get involved in anything and everything. I have become the person I am today because Avila offered so many amazing opportunities to me. I loved going to Santa Teresa, I enjoyed being a peer support leader, I loved juggling hoola hoops in the Avila school circus and I enjoyed choir. You should embrace everything that is offered to you.”

To work with asbestos and to reduce any associated risk, Helen is kitted up in a Tyvek suit with a half-face respirator.
Avila was well represented among the 1000 youth ambassadors who undertook a massive road trip to Canberra in March to help fight global poverty.

The ambassadors travelled from all parts of Australia to build national momentum for the Movement to End Poverty, supported by the Oaktree Foundation. En route they collected signatures for a petition, calling on Australia’s political leaders to do Australia’s fair share to help end poverty by allocating 70 cents out of every $100 of Australia’s national income to foreign aid by 2020.

The road trip groups met in Canberra, where the Movement to End Poverty was launched at Parliament House. 2011 College Captain Mia Lentini, Sally Redman (Class of 2011) and Phoebe Tapley (Class of 2012) said it was the social justice culture they had experienced at Avila which helped steer them towards becoming involved in the road trip.

“I met so many inspirational people on the Roadtrip to end Poverty… sharing the experience with other Avila girls made the journey so much closer to my heart. I have truly been able to commit myself to the movement to end poverty,” said Mia who is studying for a Bachelor of Business at Monash University.

“Being surrounded by so many passionate and genuinely inspiring young people on the road trip made me realise that we can and will make a difference. In the past 20 years we have halved the number of people living in extreme poverty, and within our lifetimes we hope to see it eradicated. This is something which I intend to commit myself to throughout the course of my lifetime and I am certain that the values and understanding I have gained from my time at Avila and my experiences on the road trip will continue to inform my choices and actions,” said Phoebe Tapley (Arts/Law at Monash University, with aspirations to work in the humanitarian sector after graduation).

“The road trip highlighted that the only reason I have the life that I do, and the opportunities and the potential that I have is because I was born into it by chance. Poverty is an unnecessary part of life for millions of people. Everyone has a responsibility to stand up for their fellow human beings,” Sally Redman (Health Science/Masters in Paramedics at La Trobe University Bendigo).

Live Below the Line Campaign

In the Live Below the Line Campaign, Mia and Phoebe raised more than $1700 while Felicity Smith raised more than $1000. Felicity shared the following:

“I had hunger pains, caffeine withdrawals and followed strict meal plans. But that’s nothing compared with what those living in extreme poverty go through on a daily basis. I think that if we each tried to see what it’s like to survive on almost nothing we would all understand in a very real way what some people are living through.

“While on the surface poverty is often defined as a lack of income or assets, in the day-to-day lives of the very poor, poverty becomes a network of disadvantages. The result is generation after generation of people who lack access to education, health care, adequate housing, proper sanitation and good nutrition. They are the most vulnerable to disasters, armed conflict and systems of political and economic oppression and yet they are powerless to improve their circumstances. I guess I view poverty as a lack of hope, and Live Below the Line is providing hope to people who need it most. I was shocked that in countries just north of Australia such as Cambodia and Papua New Guinea, people live without running water or access to schools and medical care.

“I am grateful to Avila for giving me a broader sense of community and providing me with countless opportunities for social justice pursuits and awareness. In particular, a driving force in allowing my passion for social justice to flourish was Mrs Christine Valladares. Since leaving Avila, I feel I have a responsibility to continue raising awareness and helping others because together I believe we can eradicate extreme poverty.

“Before the Roadtrip, I met so many inspirational people on the Roadtrip to end Poverty… sharing the experience with other Avila girls made the journey so much closer to my heart. I have truly been able to commit myself to the movement to end poverty,” said Mia who is studying for a Bachelor of Business at Monash University.

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“In the future I plan to do my Masters of Education and hope to be a secondary school teacher specialising in Drama and English Literature.”.

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Determination, passion make Bryony unstoppable

Faith and determination by the bucket load and a passion for the performing arts have been the key driving forces for past student Bryony Balaton-Chrimes (Class of 2003).

In April Bryony graduated from Monash University with a degree in Performing Arts, with a double major in Performance Studies and Drama and Theatre Studies and a minor in Philosophy.

Such an achievement is all the more significant for 27-year-old Bryony because she is legally blind due to Albinism.

“Whether you have a disability or not, if you are determined and passionate about achieving something, you will always find a way… it just might take a bit longer for some,” says Bryony who also draws much from her faith in God.

“When things get a bit overwhelming, I remind myself that God has a plan for me and that things happen for a reason. Also, that my proudest achievements have all been the result of very hard work.”

Bryony credits Avila for helping instil in her a strong sense of faith and also providing excellent role models during her young adulthood. She feels privileged to have been at Avila during the era of past Principal, the late Ms Filomena Salvatore, and the late Mrs Chris Dalwood.

“They, and others, helped teach me to be strong and tenacious and to simply ‘go for it’ in terms of what I wanted in life … Avila has always offered so many opportunities for girls to excel and discover where their talents lie … no area was undernourished or undervalued.”

Bryony stressed the importance of “pursuing the things you like, that make you happy even though it may not seem like the most practical or safest thing to do”.

“If you have faith in your passion and ability then when challenges come your way they are easier to handle.”

Having undertaken an arts-oriented VCE course, Bryony followed her passion directly to Monash University because she considered it offered the best all round course in the performing arts. Monash exceeded her expectations in terms of what she learned and opportunities such as co-directing a performance of *Julius Caesar*, a true honour for a Shakespeare buff.

Now armed with her tertiary qualifications, Bryony would ultimately like to use her skills to direct and produce audiobooks and possibly undertake a masters or doctorate in performing arts. In the meantime, she is keen to source other directing work.

One of Bryony’s greatest loves is her guide dog, Nancy, who she has had for just over 12 months.

“It is absolutely wonderful having Nancy. I had not realised how much confidence and mobility I had lost until she came into my life. We trained together, at the Guide Dogs Victoria residential facility in Kew for a month. When training had finished I felt reinvigorated, like the world was at my feet and I was ready to go and get it!” said Bryony whose eyesight further deteriorated about four years ago.

She paid tribute to the work of Guide Dogs Victoria for whom she does volunteer promotional work.

Bryony’s two older sisters also attended Avila. Jessica, 32, who left Avila in Year 9 in 1995, has launched her own children’s clothing label, Mumboo, while Samantha, Class of 2000, has completed her doctorate in political studies and is currently a research fellow at Melbourne University.

CLASS of 2012 REUNION

A reunion for the Class of 2012 will be held in the College dining room from 5.30pm on Tuesday evening, August 13.

This is always a fun gathering for our recent graduates to share their past Avila journey thus far.
Finding a niche in nursing/midwifery

Sophie Landells at her graduation.

Two Class of 2008 graduates, Sophie Landells and Hannah Bartos are discovering the rewards of career paths in nursing/midwifery. Sophie, who this year secured a coveted graduate position with the Royal Women’s Hospital, and Hanna, who undertook a study tour to the Philippines, share their insights in the following article.

Graduate nurse and midwife, Sophie Landells, is a perfect example of how disappointment can sometimes open windows to even more rewarding opportunities.

The Class of 2008 graduate had her sights set on a career in medicine and obstetrics. While she was just under the superscore required to get into medicine, she shifted direction slightly and enrolled for a double degree in nursing and midwifery at Deakin University. She has never looked back.

“I love it … From my very first placement in the first year of the course, I knew I had made the right choice,” said Sophie whose passion is midwifery and women’s health.

Her love of her chosen career path was reflected in her graduating with distinctions in the double degree course earlier this year, and excelling in her practical placements. Also, she landed a coveted graduate position at the Royal Women’s Hospital, the leading specialist in women’s health in Australia. About 300 applicants were received for the 12 positions in the nursing/midwifery graduate program.

“As a midwife, I love supporting women and helping them to believe in themselves so that they can go home knowing they can care for and breastfeed their new baby; to believe in themselves so that they can deal with the pain of giving birth,” Sophie explained.

And, while she has already attended more than 50 births the “miracle” of birth amazes her every time. “It is absolutely stunning,” she said.

Sophie found the Deakin course prepared her well for full-time work, however it has still been a steep learning curve and also emotionally challenging given the extra responsibilities as a graduate nurse and no longer a student.

Looking to the future, Sophie would like to become involved in clinical education to support students interested in nursing/midwifery and new graduates. She is also keen to work overseas and in rural settings.

She recalled fondly her time at Avila and the strong friendships she made and urged students to select subjects that they enjoy because it makes learning so much easier.

“And, if things don’t work out quite how you would like then use it as a stepping stone to something else … sometimes the alternative can be the better pathway.”

Meanwhile … Hannah Bartos, who is undertaking the same double degree at Deakin, had the opportunity to participate in a study tour in the Philippines earlier this year.

Hannah shared the following thoughts:

“When I graduated from Avila, I was unsure about which career path to take. After considering everything from Arts to Business, I decided that I wanted a job where I could help those in need. I enrolled in nursing/midwifery at Deakin University and I couldn’t be happier.

“In February I travelled to the Philippines with a group of nursing students. We conducted health clinics and provided health education for local adults and children. We were also lucky enough to spend some time exploring the beautiful, tropical country.

“I returned to Australia feeling like I had made a difference, however small, to people who aren’t as lucky as we are here. I would encourage everyone to jump at the chance to have a similar experience if the opportunity ever presents. Avila’s caring culture should be shared with the rest of the world!”

“One thing I learnt on my trip, it’s that giving a little really does go a long way.”

Hannah Bartos in the Philippines.
B eing a member of Victoria Police has enabled past Avila student Sophie Todorov (Class of 1992), a Leading Senior Constable at the Mooroolbark Police Station, to combine many of her passions in the one career.

A sports enthusiast with a love of reading, writing and learning, Sophie’s Year 10 work experience, including a week of her school holidays, was in the areas of sports journalism, kindergarten teaching and the police force. And, she loved them all!

Whilst she missed out on a coveted place in journalism at RMIT, and contemplated physical education teaching, Sophie followed the advice of her Year 12 career’s advisor and enrolled in a Professional Writing & Media course (Bachelor of Arts) at Deakin University.

However, after completing her degree course, she went cold on pursuing a career in journalism: “I dreaded the thought of having to sit in an office for most of the day and work hard to make a name for myself in such a ‘cut throat’ and ‘it’s who you know’ type of industry,” said Sophie who’s attention then zeroed in on a Victoria Police recruitment campaign.

“Policing looked like an exciting job and involved fitness. I graduated from the Police Academy in September 1996. As I marched out onto the parade ground at 21 years of age, Commissioner Neil Comrie asked me what I had done beforehand. When I told him, he raised his eyebrows and asked ‘And you’re doing this job?’ I said, ‘Yes, I’m really good at spelling!’ Awkward. I look back and laugh, because as it turned out, my writing and spelling skills were invaluable as 80 per cent of general policing was paperwork,” Sophie recalled.

Sophie’s policing career has been very rewarding because it has enabled her to help others and make a positive difference. Also, she has developed many diverse skills and qualifications because of the numerous career opportunities for both men and women in Victoria Police.

“No two days are the same in my job. I teach in schools, liaise with youth in the community, attend critical incidents, investigate accidents and crimes, resolve family conflict and enforce the law on the roads. I have a Certificate III in Fitness to mentor other police members, I am a qualified peer support officer, have completed supervision and leadership courses and am a qualified detective,” she said.

Sophie said it was always important to keep options open and to consider all opportunities as learning experiences, whether they be part-time work, travel or tertiary education. Also, she advised students to choose the subjects they enjoyed.

And what about Sophie’s writing aspirations?

“I still hope to write a book one day about a police related story that recently made the media.”
From May 1 to 3, all Year 7 students participated in our annual camp at the Phillip Island Adventure Resort. Whilst the weather wasn’t initially on our side, we were treated to two days of gloriously sunny and warm weather which allowed the students to enjoy numerous activities, including the flying fox, giant swing, canoeing and A’Maze N Things.

Students also had the opportunity to see Phillip Island’s famous little penguins in their natural environment at the Phillip Island Penguin Parade, as well as being treated to lively evening activities put together by some of the Year 7 teachers, including a trivia night and a fashion parade where all the outfits were made from newspaper.

Students returned home on the Friday afternoon feeling absolutely worn out from all the activities, but with a real buzz from what they had achieved on camp!

Year 7 Camp is an integral part of the wider Discovery Learning program at Avila. Some of the aims of the camp were to involve students in physical activities that challenged them in order to build confidence in their own activities; provide opportunities for students to utilise their problem solving and team building skills; and to develop their independence by taking greater responsibility for themselves.

Students were provided with opportunities to develop these aims through the broad range of activities they completed and the new and existing friendships they developed during camp. Our 2013 Year 7 camp was a great success and a huge thank you goes out to all staff and students involved.

Ms Karis Dalton, Year 7 Co-ordinator
Ms Marina Kelly, Discovery Learning Co-ordinator
Solid training has reaped rewards for many of Avila’s sports teams who competed in inter-school competitions in recent times.

The SCSA Swimming and Diving Competition was held at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatics Centre towards the end of Term One.

In the swimming, the Seniors finished 1st, Intermediates 5th and Juniors 6th. Overall, Avila finished 3rd. In the diving, Avila came first overall.

Thank you to the coaches: Miss Nerida King, Ms Jenny Brown, Miss Carly Randle, Ms Marina Kelly, Ms Meg Gilfedder and past student, Danielle Costello.

Schoolaerobics
The Schoolaerobics Competition was held at The Geelong Arena on Sunday May 12.

Yvanah Hernandez put on a very impressive performance to win her singles division and will compete in the State finals. It was also exciting that all of our four teams - Dynamic Divas, Fruit Loops, Pumpin’ It and Accelerate - qualified for entry into the Wildcard round of the State Finals in late June.

Thank you to the coaches: Mrs Nicole Brennan, Mrs Donna Teekens, Miss Nerida King, and past students Naomi Linossier, Madeleine Heyn and Roisin Selvarajoo.

SCSA Athletics
The SCSA Athletics (Division 1) Competition was held at Lakeside Stadium, Albert Park on May 17 with Avila coming ninth overall.

Thanks to the coaches – Mrs Clare Manning, Mrs Donna Bell, Mrs Cathy Bolduan and past student Sally Boxall.

SCSA Basketball
Avila hosted the SCSA Basketball (Division 1) Competition at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatics Centre on May 27.

The Seniors finished 2nd, Intermediates 5th and Juniors 4th.

Thanks to the coaches – Mrs Clare Manning, Mrs Nicole Brennan and Mrs Brenda Dent.